

Home Life on Early Ranches of Southwest Texas

CHAPTER XXXVI

Heinrich Conrad Kothmann Mason County

HENRICH Conrad Kothmann was forty-three years old when he decided to move from Germany to Texas. He had married Johanne Sophie Walters Kothmann, his oldest brother's widow, when she was twenty-six years old, and they had established their home on the old estate in Hanover, Germany, which is still in possession of the Kothmann family. They lived there for seven years, during which time their two children, Johann Heinrich Wilhelm and Henriette Sophie, were born. Johanne Sophie Kothmann passed away on March 31, 1831, and Heinrich was left with his two motherless children.

Fifteen months later, Mr. Kothmann married Ilse Katherine Pahlmann.

During the next thirteen years six children were born to them, the last child dying in infancy.

Those thirteen years were happy years inside the walls of the Kothmann home. The children skated on the ice and hunted ducks in the river. Mr. Kothmann was a musician of some note, owning and playing several instruments. He played the clarinet in the Municipal Band in Hanover, but his favorite instrument was the violin. He composed several pieces of music and while he worked at his trade, that of a cabinet maker, he was arranging in his mind strains of music which he later wrote.

Ilse Katherine Kothmann was happy. She frequently sang and danced as she worked, and after supper when the family gathered around the fireside they sang together the lovely old German songs. Frau Kothmann was very proud when her husband was invited to play for some of the big weddings and other occasions in Hanover.

Political and economic conditions in Germany were becoming intolerable. The Kothmanns wanted their children to have better opportunities than were possible in the Fatherland. They listened to the glowing reports of the wonderful oppor-



Mrs. and Mr. H. C. Kothmann.

tunities in the new Lone Star Republic of Texas, a country that had won its freedom from Mexico. Heinrich Kothmann reasoned, "people in the new world have better opportunities. They even dared to throw off the yoke of oppression."

An immigration society was formed by a group of twenty German noblemen which was known as the "Verien Zurn Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas" (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas). The verien was established to help German immigrants in Texas, to alleviate their hardships, and to create for them a normal happy situation.

According to Prince Carl Solms-Braunfels, the commissioner-general employed by the verien, who was already in Texas, to make arrangements for establishing the German colonists:

"The Germans in Texas had already attained a reputation as diligent and peaceful citizens, the American consequently would look favorably upon the immigration of Germans into this country. Through the concentration of the German elements in the magnificent and beautiful West Texas, it would be possible for the German settlers to retain their languages, customs and practices. This conservative system for the benefit of the German elements and the German Nationality is indeed to be distinguished from the idea of establishing a State within a State. This is the very thing that would not be tolerated in any country in the world. Indeed this cannot be in the mind of a sensible, peace loving and well meaning man. The principle of retaining the German traits and characteristics can be very well subjected to the constitution and laws of the country. This depends especially upon the will of the first immigrants and the possibility of remaining continuously in contact in material as well as intellectual affairs of the mother-land. From this is derived a two-fold benefit. The immigrant would find conditions in the new country very much like those he left behind. Instead of being surrounded by strange faces or hearing a strange language, of which he could not understand a word, or being forced to adopt strange customs, he would almost immediately feel at home."

Immigration was encouraged by the German government because "the father-

By MYRTLE MURRAY
Home Industries Specialist,
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land was over populated; it did not afford an opportunity for expansion; it could not nourish all the people on its soil, and although there was lots of work, there were far too many workers.

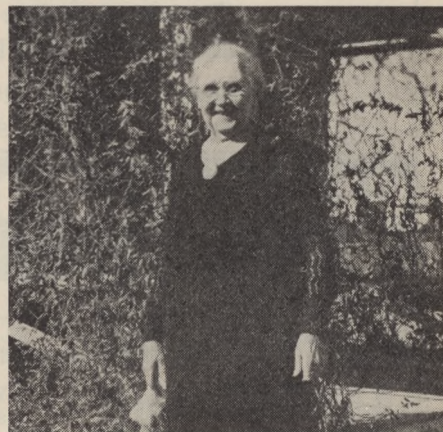
"The second reason benefits the German manufacturer, as well as German trade and shipping. A German population in Texas which continues to live according to the customs and habits acquired at home is naturally in need of those things which were made and manufactured in Germany. This would increase the output of goods manufactured in Germany, and give employment to additional German laborers. The volume of these commodities demanded by the colonists would increase as the German population increased, especially if they stayed together and remained faithful to German customs and habits. The larger the export of such articles, the more the trade will profit, the better the shipping will become."

Heinrich Kothmann listened carefully to the reports about Texas. It was a land of liberty and opportunity! A land where his children could have a home of their own! And his wife agreed with him. The children probably thought it was a great adventure.

On September 26, 1845, Heinrich and Katherine Kothmann with their children, Katherine, thirteen; Henry, ten; Dietrich, eight; Dorothee, five, and Caroline, three, boarded a three-masted sailboat at Bremen and started on their three-months perilous trip to Texas, leaving Johann Heinrich Wilhelm and Henriette Sophie, the children by Mr. Kothmann's first wife, in Weddeheine.

It was so strange to the children to

*Quotations taken from Prince Carl Solms-Braunfels, "Texas 1844-1845," which was deposited in the corner stone of the Sophienburg.



MRS. LEN W. LAGLE

Only living member of the Heinrich Conrad Kothmann and Ilse Katherine Pahlmann Kothmann family. Mrs. Lagle lives in San Angelo.

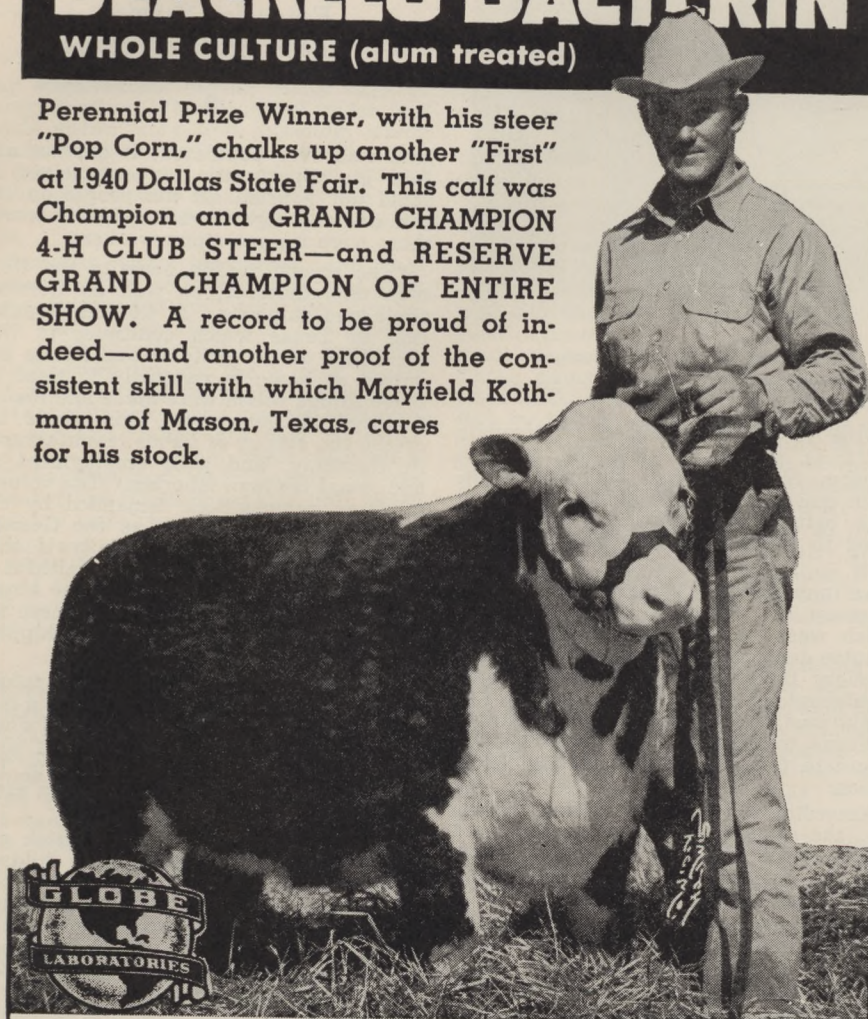


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see nothing but water for days and days. But their mother smiled happily and they were sure it was allright. Finally they reached Galveston on December 20, 1845, and were towed to Indianola or "Karl's Haven," where it had been arranged by the "verien" for them to land.

The Christmas celebration had always been the greatest occasion of the year for the Kothmann children. But, when they landed with solemn wonder they saw no signs of Christmas. People were living in tents or damp dugouts under unsanitary conditions. Their household goods were wet. Chests, the clothes and household linen had to be aired and dried. Mr. Kothmann had brought over a trunk full of musical instruments. He was happy to find that they were not injured.

They had expected to go to their grant of land immediately after landing, and the commissioner, Mr. Meusebach, successor to Prince Carl Solms-Braunfels, had made arrangements for the immigrants to be transported immediately after landing to New Braunfels. But war with Mexico had followed the annexation of Texas to the United States late that year. The wagons and mule teams which had been engaged to transport the immigrants were requisitioned by the U. S. Government and were being used by the army. The colonists, therefore, had to remain in Indianola until Mr. Meusebach could make other arrangements.

Death Took a Toll

The Kothmanns suffered severely that winter, as did the other colonists. The heavy rains, and not being acclimated, added to their misery. Disease was rampant. Mrs. Kothmann forgot to laugh and dance in her anxiety over her precious children. Dietrich was quite ill and little Caroline, her baby, died on March 24. Just three months after they landed, a son, Karl, was born.

She awoke one night, and as was her custom, she reached over to feel her baby to see if he was allright. His little face was wet because it was raining on him. Many families were broken by death that winter. Eighty-eight of the young German men joined the United States army and fought in the Mexican War. Those sturdy German immigrants had come to Texas to live and were ready right from the start to fight for it.

Then the young German soldiers returned from the war with Mexico to their families who were still in Indianola. They were sent with other soldiers to escort the immigrants to New Braunfels and finally to Fredericksburg. The Kothmann family was one less in number than had come across the Atlantic in the three-masted ship, but Karl, a native Texan, made up that loss. Mr. Kothmann and the boys had carefully packed their household goods into one of the big wagons. His beloved musical instruments occupied a place of safety.

The moving caravan was a colorful picture and it was well organized. First, came the leader of the group, well armed, followed by a large number of armed soldiers, some on foot and some on horseback to protect the immigrants from the hostile savages and to help them over muddy roads and swollen streams.

The large wagons and two-wheel carts, ox-drawn, loaded to capacity with household goods, came next, followed by the determined colonists. Many of them were walking. The men carried bundles of clothing and their axes. They would have their weapons ready in case of sudden attacks by the Indians. The women, some-

times riding and sometimes walking, carried their babies, while the older children carried coffee mills, water buckets and other precious pieces of household equipment. They came so slowly that frequently the camp fires were started with coals brought from the camp fires of the previous night. After supper they sat around the camp fires, rested and sometimes sang. Their troubles seemed farther away when the brilliant Texas sunshine pierced through the heavy rain clouds. The country was beautiful with myriads of many kinds of wild flowers of all hues of colors.

They reached New Braunfels in three weeks, but they paused there only a short time, because that station was overcrowded with colonists. A few months earlier Mr. Meusebach had selected a site for a new settlement of German colonists. He had gone on a reconnoitering trip and found that the original grant arranged for by "the society" was in the mountains and was inhabited by wild Indians. Then he went to Austin and purchased 10,000 acres of land which lay between New Braunfels and the original grant farther up in the mountains. He sent a company of thirty-six men, including two surveyors, to open a road and to survey the townsite. He named the new town site "Fredericksburg" in honor of Prince Frederick, one of the members of "the society." A crude log hut, partly covered with brush, was built by the advance expedition as protection against the weather for the first contingent of colonists that should arrive. When their work was finished the men buried the tools beside the hut and built a large fire over the spot to eliminate all traces that might lead to their hiding place.

Move on West

On April 23, 1846, the first group of colonists started from New Braunfels. The Kothmann family was among the 120 men, women and children of that group. Baby Karl was only one month old and he had already made the trip from Indianola to New Braunfels. There were only twenty ox-drawn wagons and two two-wheel Mexican carts to carry the colonists and their household goods. Again many of the colonists walked most of the way. Mrs. Kothmann had ridden much of the way from Indianola to New Braunfels and nursed her new baby, but now she was stronger and could walk part of the time.

Eight soldiers went along to help protect them from the Indians. The road wound over rocky mountains and into low boggy valleys and creek bottoms. Some times the wagons had to be pushed over the mountains and bogs had to be filled with rocks so that the heavily loaded wagons could pass. Mr. Kothmann and his older boys, Friedrich, generally called "Fritz," and Dietrich worked untiringly in helping the wagons along. The other Kothmann children helped to care for the baby and carried small pieces of household equipment.

As the caravan reached the south side of the Pedernales River the advance guard saw a small group of Delaware Indians approaching, making signs of peace. Mrs. Kothmann felt that her heart almost stopped beating. She gathered her children closely around her and looked at the approaching Indians and at the seemingly countless wigwams of the Indian village. Unfortunately, the Indians and colonists could not understand each other, but the Indians were friendly. As they out-numbered the colonists, the only

thing for the latter to do was to move on.

As the first riders reached the other side of the river the sound of a rifle shot was heard by those in the rear. "Bring me a butcher knife," was a command that broke the tense stillness. The colonists thought they foresaw their doom. But, to their great joy they soon found that one of their soldiers had killed a bear on the banks of the Pedernales. Soon after another shot was heard. This time a soldier had killed a panther as it sprang to attack another soldier.

Each day of travel brought its dangers and hardships until finally, on May 8, 1846, seven months and twelve days after boarding the three-masted ship at Bremen, the Kothmanns arrived in Fredericksburg which would be their home until such time as they could go on to their land grant. There was no sign of civilization except the crude unfinished log hut built by the surveying party. Soon, before the blazing camp fires, they were roasting the meat of the bear and

panther for supper. Then with a prayer of thanksgiving in their hearts, they slept under the sheltering branches of the huge oaks and the canopy of stars overhead.

Each family was assigned ten acres of land as compensation for not being conducted to the society's land tract, and on which they could build a home and plant a garden. Temporary shelters of tents and brush arbors were first constructed. Three days after their arrival the soldiers who had accompanied them and the twenty teamsters returned to New Braunfels, leaving the new immigrants to their own ingenuity and to the mercy of the Indians.

The company had agreed to furnish food until a crop and garden could be raised, but because of the extra expense of keeping the colonists in Indianola during the winter and added expense of transportation, the funds of the company was considerably depleted. It was too late to raise many vegetables that year.

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Many of the men went to other settlements to work to earn a little money during the summer and coming winter. The women and children would have suffered had the Indians not supplied them with venison and bear meat in exchange for mere trifles—barrel hoops were favorites. The colonists were not accustomed to purely a meat diet and disease broke out among them. But one of the colonists, a botanist, taught them to eat wild greens, dandelion, watercress and poke.

Mr. and Mrs. Kothmann were thankful that their family maintained reasonably good health. As they needed money badly, the following winter Mr. Kothmann and Fritz walked to Austin barefooted determined to find work. They split rails for twenty-five cents a day and boarded themselves. When they completed their job they bought provisions for the family and carried them home on their backs, walking again the eighty miles from Austin to Fredericksburg. Naturally they received a warm welcome from Mrs. Kothmann and the children.

Many times that winter Mrs. Kothmann and the children were hungry, but new settlers located in Fredericksburg and Fort Martin Scott was established. Mr. Kothmann began playing his various

musical instruments for different occasions. He was never happier than when he was playing. He forgot his troubles. He was earning money. He and Mrs. Kothmann were proud when Fritz and Dietrich learned to play well enough to assist him when he played for festive occasions. Mr. Kothmann was glad to have the honor to play at the wedding in Fredericksburg of Charles H. Nimitz, the original proprietor of the Nimitz Hotel, and Miss Sophie Miller. The ceremony was followed by a big dance. It seemed like old times to be playing for a great wedding, thought Heinrich Kothmann. He could play nearly any selection he ever heard. During a festive occasion, Mr. Kothmann was asked by an army captain if he could play a certain selection. Without a moment's hesitation he began playing it. The captain was so delighted he asked Mr. Kothmann several times to repeat it. Each time the captain tossed him a half dollar. When Mr. Kothmann finally stopped playing he found his pockets full of half dollars.

Despite the hard times and innumerable hardships, the colonists built an octagonal community church, "Die Kaffeemuele," which was used by all denominations. Though Mr. Kothmann read

the Bible and held family prayers each night the entire family appreciated the opportunity of attending services in the new church. It was both a religious and social center.

While Mr. Kothmann and the older boys were making a garden and doing whatever they could to earn some necessary money, Mrs. Kothmann was busy taking care of the home and caring for the smaller children and helping to nurse the sick in the neighborhood. Another baby son, William, was born in 1850. Mrs. Kothmann had never become reconciled to the death of her little daughter, Caroline, in Indianola, and when a baby girl, her last, was born in 1852, she also named her Caroline.

Trials and Tribulations

Ten years passed away; ten years full of hardships and suffering. The hardships were slightly alleviated after Fort Martin Scott was established. Although Mr. Kothmann had not farmed until he came to this country he raised good watermelons and vegetables which he sold at "the fort." He had also accumulated some cattle. Meantime, his son and daughter by his first wife, whom he had left in Hanover, Germany, had married and moved near Fredericksburg and once again the entire Kothmann family were living near each other. Sometimes the children had been hungry enough to pick up the corn that was scattered on the ground by the horses at the fort and bring it home to Mrs. Kothmann. She washed and ground it and made it into bread. The family agreed it was good and had a finer flavor than any cake they had ever eaten.

Katherine had grown into a beautiful and charming girl with her dark brown curly hair and laughing eyes. She married Captain Jones of Fort Martin Scott. When he was transferred he did not return for his wife and baby boy, August. Later she married Henry Keyser, a brother-in-law of William Mogford. They moved into a camp quite a distance from Fredericksburg and toward the grant of land originally promised the colonists by the immigration company.

Fritz and Dietrich were inseparable. They played together and fought together as little boys. As they grew, they worked together. They were away from home weeks at a time when they surveyed the land in Gillespie and Mason counties under the direction of Captain Bieberstein. Each man rode a horse and had a mule to carry his bedding and provisions. One day they killed a leopard and stretched the skin over the back of one of the pack mules to dry. The mule expressed his objections by pitching and kicking and scattering coffee, bacon, beans and biscuits all over the place. That mule was smart. After that escapade he was worthless as a pack mule, so he had the easier job of having the captain ride him.

Fritz and Dietrich joined the Llano Leather Jackets, a frontier home guard company commanded by Captain Bieberstein. They continued to work together until Fritz was twenty-one years old, at which time he married Sophie Hartwig, also a native of Germany.

After Fritz married, Dietrich became his father's assistant. He took care of the stock and hauled freight with ox-teams between San Antonio, Waco and Brenham, which was a great help financially to the family.

Meantime, the other children were growing up. Mr. and Mrs. Kothmann oftentimes talked about them and wondered

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what their future would be. John and his wife, Sophie and her husband, Heinrich Carles, (the children by the first wife) were recognized as substantial citizens. Fritz had married a fine young woman and Dietrich was a dependable young man. "Despite all the hardships and sufferings, we are glad we came to Texas," Mr. and Mrs. Kothmann told each other, and now their ambition was to move on the 640 acres of land promised them by the immigration company so they could live on their own land, and the married children could establish homes on their own lands.

In 1856, ten years after sailing from Germany, they loaded the wagons with their household goods and once again started towards their final destination—the Hoerstes, Jordans and other families going with them. Mr. Kothmann had already built their log house. It contained one big room, a cellar and a small side room with a porch across the front. The one big room, well built, was to be used as a living room, dining room and kitchen, with a loft for beds. Later another room was added. Having been a cabinet maker, Mr. Kothmann knew just how to cut and hew the logs and join them so there were no cracks left. Al-

though Mrs. Kothmann was glad to at last move into the home for which she had left her native land, she did not sing and dance as readily as she did in the early days. Because she was too tired and lived under such a strain and she was sometimes cross with the children. "I'll spank, if you don't behave," she would sometimes threaten. But that did not happen often. Usually she was her children's confidant and companion. She bought books from the peddlers and read stories to the children.

They had lots of German songs and music. As they sat on the porch the entire family would sing. Mrs. Kothmann had a soft alto voice. Mr. Kothmann would sing low soprano or bass.

Mr. Kothmann's music made him bear many of his hardships, as well as helping him financially. He could usually manage the children with the promise, "Now, children, if you will be good, I'll play the violin for you."

Feared Indian Raids

Caroline was only six years old when they moved from Fredericksburg to Upper Willow in Mason county. She did not want to leave her two dearest playmates and she divided her playthings with them. The move to her was a gay adventure, and she thought they would get rich and would buy her new toys. She and William played stick ponies. Their playhouse was in the corner of the yard, where they fixed a toy bed and table. They were afraid to get out of the yard because of the Indians. As Mrs. Kothmann went about putting her new house in order she tried always to keep the children in her sight because, she too, was afraid the Indians might steal them. "Don't go near that pool of water," she ordered, "there are snakes in there." If they went beyond it they were out of sight.

Mrs. Kothmann cooked on a large fireplace built up high in one corner of the room so she did not have to stoop so much. She baked bread in one corner, meat and vegetables in the other corner, and they had plenty to eat. Deer ran close to the house. Hogs were fattened on acorn mast. They had chickens, milk, butter, corn, peas and watermelons. She made cheese by placing rennet—gotten from a deer—into milk that made it curd. The curd was placed between a cheese cloth and then put into a press.

She and Dorothee did the sewing for the entire family, but they did not have to weave the cloth. Mr. Kothmann and the boys brought large bolts of percale, calico, unbleached domestic and jeans to them when they returned from their freighting trips to San Antonio, Austin and Mexico. Mrs. Kothmann spun and Dorothee and Caroline knitted the stockings and socks. They wore white socks and stockings for summer but died them blue with indigo for winter.

The Kothmanns believed in living at home and paying their way as they went. They would take butter, roasting ears, watermelons, pumpkins and other farm produce to Mason to sell or to exchange for coffee, sugar and flour. Sometimes they would go home with as much as \$15.

Mr. Kothmann usually butchered five or six hogs at one time for home use. He cured the bacon, hams and shoulders himself but got a real butcher to mix the sausage. He mixed pork and beef and seasoned it with pepper and salt, put it into casings and smoked it with chips, then wrapped them in paper and lard,



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and put them in boxes in the cellar where they kept fresh all summer.

"There's a little bunch of cattle I would like to buy," Mr. Kothmann remarked one day, "but I don't have enough money."

"Let me see if I have it," Mrs. Kothmann said. And she did have that much from the sale of vegetables and eggs to the fort, and he bought the cattle.

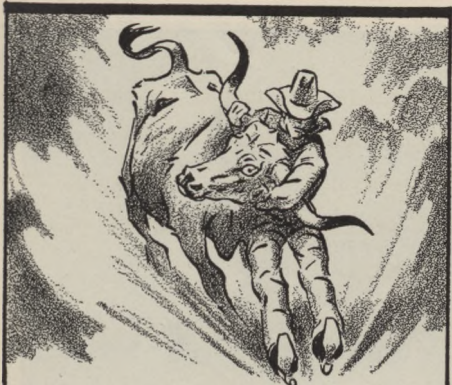
They sometimes bought pressed vegetables from the fort. Mrs. Kothmann would make soup and season it with butter, pepper and salt. The children thought this was a real treat.

They raised "yard beans," or long pod beans, bought rice, prunes, dried apples, and had plenty of fresh meat.

When Mr. Kothmann would have to go to Fredericksburg or would be out gathering cattle, little Caroline was always afraid. Frequently they would hear Indians making sounds like an owl. The Kothmanns and their neighbors would hide their horses. Sometimes they would shoot a gun to let the neighbors know they, too, were listening and knew about the Indians. One time Caroline heard those sounds. "Oh, mother, I know there is something wrong," she wailed, "the horses are running."

The next morning she went to the well to get her mother a drink as was her custom. There was an Indian quilt nearby. The rail fence had been taken down but the horses were not out. Evidently, the Indians thinking there was a man in the house, had become frightened and ran away before getting the horses. Sometimes they did take the horses.

The children attended school in a little log schoolhouse near by. Otto Donop



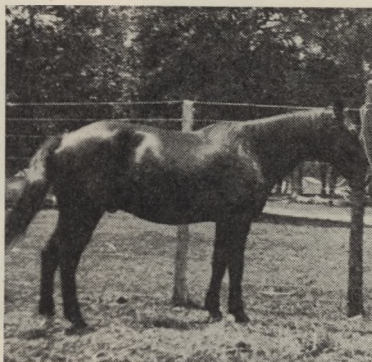
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Is the age of my black hoss;
He isn't a colt any longer,
But neither is his boss.*

*He never misses a cow
When cutting out the herd;
He's always on the jump
As soon as I give the word.*

*He's just a little slower,
That I'll not deny;
But, until taps are sounded,
Narry a cow gets by.*

*Never a colt was foaled
With a spirit quite as fine;
So I doff my hat to Coley,
This old black hoss o' mine!*

was their teacher. He was well educated and taught both English and German. He would not accept pay for teaching. Caroline liked the school because it was near her home. She thought the Indians could not get her.

Everything was getting along fine, Mr. and Mrs. Kothmann thought. The cattle had increased under Dietrich's efficient management. Mr. Kothmann was devoting most of his time to his horses and his flock of 250 sheep, and a peach orchard had been started.

After the day's work was over the family again spent many happy evenings singing together. Sometimes they sang lovely old German songs, but they also sang some in English. Caroline, sitting at her mother's knee with her head in her mother's lap, thought it the most beautiful music in the world.

Then the Civil War started. Dietrich went to Austin with several yoke of oxen to haul freight. An officer wanted him to enlist immediately for men with teams were in demand. But he accepted an offer of a friend to trade his team for stock on the Llano River and returned home. He continued to serve with the Llano Leather Jackets.

They had a very hard time during the war and did not have enough to eat. However, they were always ready to share with anyone in distress. One very cold day when the rapidly falling sleet had

already made the ground white a family came by in a covered wagon and camped near the front gate. The man came after Mrs. Kothmann, and asked if she would come stay with his wife for a while. The next morning there was a little baby in the covered wagon. The Kothmann children decided immediately that the baby should be called "Snowed In."

Another time Dietrich went to Austin to get freight from James Ranck, taking his youngest brother, William, with him. While enroute a man they met told of a shorter and better road and suggested that they make the return trip on that road, and that he would pay them a visit so they could get better acquainted. They did as he suggested and camped about ten miles from Austin. They did not see anything of their new found friend and they went to bed early. Dietrich was soon awakened by someone touching his hand. It was their new acquaintance. The boys arose quickly and rekindled the camp fire. They spent a very pleasant evening talking about things of common interest. When Dietrich mentioned that he had a new Navy six-shooter they immediately wanted to see it. One of the men examined it very closely and suddenly dashed away in the darkness. Dietrich never saw his six-shooter nor his new found friend again.

After the war times were easier for the Kothmanns. The orchard was bearing enough peaches to supply the family with fresh fruit during the summer and they dried enough for the winter months. They stored sweet potatoes, pumpkins and turnips in the cellar. Mrs. Kothmann cooked the dried peaches and sweetened them with home produced molasses. Mr. Kothmann took a great pride in fattening hogs out to kill by feeding them corn and cooked pumpkin.

Mrs. Kothmann continued to cook on the open fireplace in iron pots and skillets until early in the '70's when the first cook stove was purchased. The family thought that this was the greatest labor saving device that had been invented. The new stove was placed just in front of the old fireplace. A pipe connected it with the chimney so only one flue was needed.

Mrs. Kothmann continued to bake meat roasts in the Dutch oven. Only choice meats were used. If a very young deer was killed Mr. Kothmann fed it to the hogs and shot another one. Mrs. Kothmann cut the roasts very thick, seasoned them with salt and pepper and cooked them very slowly.

When the children came home from school in the afternoon they would skim off the thick cream, spread it on bread and sprinkle it with sugar and eat it.

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Sometimes they found "kaffee kakes" cut into shapes of dogs, cows and owls, and sprinkled with sugar. There was nearly always an abundance of honey. "The white man's coming," was an old saying among the Indians when they found a "honey tree." And indeed it did appear to be nature's way of providing "sweets" for the pioneers. It was not unusual to get a tubfull of honey from one "honey tree." The boys brought "yarba coffee" back with them from freighting trips, also "hat sugar," so called because it was in blocks resembling the shape of a hat. Hard sugar was also bought in blocks. The children knew when Mrs. Kothmann went to town she would bring back boxes of mixed candies. For Mr. Kothmann's treat she made cream cheese, hard clabber put in a sack until the whey had drained out and then mixed with heavy cream. Next she mixed it with finely cut onions, pepper and salt. Mr. Kothmann always drank milk while Mrs. Kothmann preferred coffee.

Mrs. Kothmann devoted her entire time to her home and her neighbors. While she was firm with her children she laughed and played with them. Sometimes she had to have help. One time when Fritz was chopping out a wood trough from a big log a splinter flew into his eye. He suffered terribly and all Mrs. Kothmann could do for him was to poultice it with meal. A neighbor, Christian Keyser, took him to a doctor in San Antonio in a cart. It was three days after the accident when he finally reached the doctor. The eye was injured so badly that he could never see out of it again. He returned home heart broken because of the loss of his eye.

"Son, it is better to go to Heaven with one eye than to have two eyes and be lost," his father comforted him.

While Mrs. Kothmann was taking care of the home, Mr. Kothmann was equally busy caring for his increasing cattle, horses and sheep. He usually kept about 200 head of sheep for home use and sold

the surplus wool. He counted them each day when he watered them. He took pride in keeping his horses fat. He always fattened his cattle on post oak mast and cooked pumpkin before slaughtering.

Mr. Kothmann usually owned about 250 brood sows. He branded two hundred calves of his own but forbade "mavericking," that is branding unbranded stray stock with his own brand. He was interested in stock, although there was little he could do at that time to improve their quality. He did fatten calves and sell them. He sold meat at the fort and in Austin. One time he offered them to a butcher in Austin for a stipulated price per pound.

"You are too high," said the butcher, "but I'll buy them by the head." He did and paid between three and four dollars more per head for them.

Kothmann Cattle Foundation

The Kothmann cattle, so well known today, were first improved when Fritz Kothmann bought two purebred Durham bulls in the early 70's and began raising from them. After that they sold regularly two-year-old steers in Austin. The Kothmanns liked the improved strain of cattle. But the real Kothmann cattle were started when Fritz went to Georgetown in about 1875 or 1876 and bought twenty-two fine Herefords and drove them home.

In 1870 Fritz bought about fifteen hundred head of cattle. He sold part of them immediately. The remainder was kept until 1873 when Fritz, Dietrich and William Kothmann took them "up the trail" and sold them on a Kansas market.

The Kothmann boys bought cattle at different times and drove them to markets in Mexico and Kansas. One time Dietrich was gone five months. He had accepted an offer from a dealer to stay and buy cattle for him. Mrs. Kothmann worried quite a bit about the boys when they made those trips.

"Oh, how I wish they were back," she would say.

During one of the trips when Karl and William were together, Karl became ill. It was a long time before they could reach a doctor. They were afraid it was typhoid fever. William and the other cowboys made a bed in the chuck wagon. When they got to the Llano River it was up. They knew they could cross it, but were afraid Karl's bed would get wet.

"I'll stay with him," William offered.

They finally decided to cross. The water came up into the wagon bed. William carried his sick brother out, then got the wagon out, and drove to the house of a friend who put Karl in his best bed. They sent for his wife but he died two days later. His wife arrived before he passed away. They brought his body on to Art and buried it in the little graveyard where his father and mother were buried later.

The boys continued to bring materials that Mrs. Kothmann, her daughters and daughters-in-law made into clothes for all the Kothmann families. Karl surprised them all one time by bringing home from Mexico a soft jacket made of deer skin embroidered in bright colors.

The three younger children, Karl, William and Caroline, the ones born in Texas, were very fond of each other. They shared each other's joys and sorrows. They would go as far as three miles to pick mulberries, went to parties on horseback, and attended church on Sunday if possible. One time they went to Castell

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to church. They spent the night there and the next day they were to drive some cattle back to Art. Karl told Caroline, "You stay in the road. I'll stay on one side and William on the other. If you see any Indians let your horse go."

Dorothee, a charming girl and a good musician, did not marry until after the Civil War. Then she married Rev. William Knolle. For weeks before the wedding date, April 24, 1866, Mrs. Kothmann, Dorothee, Caroline and the daughters-in-law worked almost constantly on her trousseau. Her wedding dress and her "second day dress" were made of materials brought from Germany by her parents when they came over twenty years before. The wedding dress was made of white mull, the skirt fashioned with two full flounces, and long flowing sleeves hung from the shoulders. The "second day dress" was of large floral design.

The house presented a festive appearance with its decoration of wild flowers of exquisite hues and colors. After the ceremony, performed by Rev. C. Plueneke, the relatives and friends were served a real wedding feast. As Mr. Kothmann had grown older he had nearly quit playing in public, but the wedding of his daughter was to him a great occasion. After the wedding supper he played his beloved violin while the bride and groom and guests danced in the yard throughout the night.

The Knolles lived at Industry. While Dorothee was happy in her new home, she missed her homefolks, so Caroline lived with her most of the time.

As Mr. Kothmann grew older he grew more reserved. Mrs. Kothmann became heavier. They thought about their fam-

ily with gratitude and pride. Their children had married fine young people and had established homes of their own. They, too, were assuming their share of responsibility in their adopted state. When Mason county was organized in 1858 Fritz was appointed sheriff and served until the regular election. "I got every man for whom papers were prepared," was his proud boast.

All of their sons were well known cattlemen and were respected citizens. Their daughters were fine home-makers and as they grew older they spent much time in visiting their parents. Mr. and Mrs. Kothmann would spend several days at a time visiting their daughters in Industry. Their sons' families visited them often.

While Mr. Kothmann had never farmed until he came to Texas he was successful in raising grain and garden products and he was a well known cattleman of his day. He was a good citizen and a successful business man. He had contributed to the social and cultural life of the community with his talent for music.

Editor's Note

This concludes the series on "Home Life on Early Ranches of Southwest Texas," which began in our issue of January, 1938. Though changes were made in the locale originally selected for these articles, in the main the families settled in 24 counties of which Bexar (San Antonio) would be about the center as between east and west. Descendants of these fine old families are prominent in the business and professional life of Texas today. Their forebears came from several European countries seeking "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" in the Texas that was to be or had just been wrested from the tyranny proscribed by the then rulers of Mexico.

These early Texans, regardless of previous nationality, made fine citizens of their adopted country and state. We of today are better off on account of who they were and what they did.

For the benefit of late subscribers of "The Cattleman" the following tabulation gives the background of each of the thirty-six chapters of "Home Life on Early Ranches of Southwest Texas."

Issue	Family	County
Jan. '38	Elijah Ray	Bee
Feb. '38	Joel D. Fenley	Uvalde
Mar. '38	R. P. Wilkinson	Goliad
Apr. '38	Orianda Thallman	Bandera
May '38	J. H. Polley	Wilson
June '38	J. C. Traylor	Calhoun-Jackson
July '38	J. R. Skiles	Karnes
Aug. '38	Heinrich Rothe	Medina
Sept. '38	I. N. Mitchell	Jackson
Oct. '38	John Campbell	Atascosa
Nov. '38	Cohn Leakey	Real
Dec. '38	Casper Real	Kerr
Jan. '39	A. L. Brock	Caldwell
Feb. '39	J. A. Clark	Lavaca
Mar. '39	Peter Fagan	Refugio
Apr. '39	George Lord	DeWitt
May '39	David Karbach	Comal
June '39	Martin de Leon	Victoria
July '39	Friedrick Holekamp	Kerr-Kendall
Aug. '39	Pendleton Rector	Guadalupe
Sept. '39	M. M. Bradford	Edwards
Oct. '39	Francis Morris	Kerr-Gillespie
Nov. '39	J. F. Miller	Colorado
Dec. '39	Henry Hoerster	Mason
Jan. '40	Jacob Linn	Bexar
Feb. '40	Ernest Henry	Robertson
Mar. '40	Martin Jordan	Gillespie
Apr. '40	Martin Dittmar	Gillespie
May '40	Henry Keese	Llano-Gillespie
June '40	Gordon Shanklin	Bell
July '40	Lucius Hicks	Bandera
Aug. '40	Sam Seward	Washington
Sept. '40	William Mogford	Gillespie-Menard
Oct. '40	William Oxsheer	Milam
Nov. '40	M. S. Munson	Brazoria
Dec. '40	H. C. Kothmann	Mason

He passed away August 27, 1881, and was buried at the old homestead in Art. Mrs. Kothmann continued to live twenty-four years longer. After recovering from the shock of her husband's death she spent much time in visiting her children where she was ever a welcome guest. Sometimes she walked seven miles from one of her children's ranches to another. She cooked favorite dishes for her children and grandchildren. She had always been a good Bible student and had memorized much of it. Now, when she met her children, grandchildren, or friends she would smile and frequently quote a verse of Scripture to them. But as she grew older she continued to visit her children but remained in her room alone much of the time, thinking over her life, the joys and the hardships, but thankful always that she and her husband had brought their children to a new country of opportunity and freedom. They had shared the first difficult years in building the now prosperous town of Fredericksburg. They had been among the first to settle on Upper Willow Creek, then a wild region infested with hostile savages. They had helped build churches and schools. Calmly and serenely she closed her eyes and was buried by her husband on February 15, 1905.

And it is with much pride that the many descendants of Heinrich Conrad Kothmann and Ilse Katherine Kothmann can look back on them today. Each member of the family may justly take pride in his ancestry and high ideals for which this first Kothmann family stood, and for their part in helping to civilize what was then a wilderness.

The children of Mr. Kothmann by his first wife were Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Kothmann and Henriette Sophie Kothmann.

The children of Mr. Kothmann and Ilse Katherine Pahlmann Kothmann were: Ilse Katherine Kothmann, Heinrich Friedrich Kothmann, Karl Dietrich Kothmann, Marie Dorothee Kothmann, Karl Kothmann, William Kothmann and Caroline Kothmann.

Only one of the children, Mrs. Caroline Kothmann Lagle, is living. She resides in San Angelo with her son, Len Lagle. Mrs. Lagle provided much of the material for this story.

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